

UNPUBLISHED

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT

No. 13-7637

LAWRENCE EDWARD COMBS, a/k/a Lawrence E. Combs,

Petitioner - Appellant,

v.

HAROLD W. CLARKE, Director, Virginia Department of
Corrections,

Respondent - Appellee,

and

CIRCUIT COURT FOR CITY OF HAMPTON, VIRGINIA,

Respondent.

Appeal from the United States District Court for the Eastern
District of Virginia, at Richmond. M. Hannah Lauck, Magistrate
Judge. (3:12-cv-00676-MHL)

Submitted: February 28, 2014

Decided: March 11, 2014

Before NIEMEYER, MOTZ, and THACKER, Circuit Judges.

Dismissed by unpublished per curiam opinion.

Lawrence Edward Combs, Appellant Pro Se. Victoria Lee Johnson,
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF VIRGINIA, Richmond, Virginia,
for Appellee.

Unpublished opinions are not binding precedent in this circuit.

PER CURIAM:

Lawrence Edward Combs seeks to appeal the district court's order denying relief on his 28 U.S.C. § 2254 (2012) petition. The order is not appealable unless a circuit justice or judge issues a certificate of appealability. 28 U.S.C. § 2253(c)(1)(A) (2012). A certificate of appealability will not issue absent "a substantial showing of the denial of a constitutional right." 28 U.S.C. § 2253(c)(2) (2012). When the district court denies relief on the merits, a prisoner satisfies this standard by demonstrating that reasonable jurists would find that the district court's assessment of the constitutional claims is debatable or wrong. Slack v. McDaniel, 529 U.S. 473, 484 (2000); see Miller-El v. Cockrell, 537 U.S. 322, 336-38 (2003). When the district court denies relief on procedural grounds, the prisoner must demonstrate both that the dispositive procedural ruling is debatable, and that the petition states a debatable claim of the denial of a constitutional right. Slack, 529 U.S. at 484-85.

We have independently reviewed the record and conclude that Combs has not made the requisite showing. Accordingly, we deny a certificate of appealability, deny leave to proceed in forma pauperis, and dismiss the appeal. We dispense with oral argument because the facts and legal contentions are adequately

presented in the materials before this court and argument would not aid the decisional process.

DISMISSED